

**VILAS COUNTY FORESTRY, RECREATION, & LAND DEPARTMENT**



**Vilas County Forestry, Recreation & Land Committee**

**Steve Doyen, Chair**

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**John Gagnon, CF, Forest Administrator**

**Jeremiah Oftedahl, Assistant Forest Administrator**

**Dale Mayo, Parks & Recreation Administrator**

**James Jefferson, Forestry Technician**

**Don Merten, Parks Technician**

**Constance Valkenaar, Administrative Assistant II**

49 **Vilas County Forest Administrators Grant**

50 **2019 Work Plan**

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53 **Forest Acres: Regular Entry Acres 41,078.62; Special Acres 62.79; Total Acres 41,141.41**

54  
55 OUR MISSION

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57 Natural resources, such as those provided by the County Forest, are the base for addressing the  
58 ecological and socioeconomic needs of society. The mission of the County Forest is to manage,  
59 conserve, and protect these resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations.

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61 The County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect  
62 and disease outbreaks; and from human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization,  
63 environmental degradation and excessive development. While managed for environmental needs  
64 including watershed protection, protection of rare plant and animal communities and  
65 maintenance of plant and animal diversity, these same resources must also be managed and  
66 provide for sociological needs, including provisions for recreational opportunities and the  
67 production of raw materials for wood-using industries.

68  
69 Management must balance local needs with broader state, national, and global concerns through  
70 integration of sound forestry, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil, and  
71 recreational practices. Management will provide this variety of products and amenities for the  
72 future using sustainable forest management practices.

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74 DESIRED FUTURE FOREST CONDITIONS

75  
76 In general, the Vilas County Forest plan is to maintain the current distribution of forest cover  
77 types as they exist now. However, there will be changes in the acreage of some cover types. Age  
78 class distribution will change to be more diverse as the Forest moves toward regulation of the  
79 annual allowable harvest of the different cover types. The annual allowable harvest on the Vilas  
80 County Forest for the next 15-year period is approximately 1,057 acres per year. The minor  
81 changes in forest type acreage will primarily occur in the Aspen, Oak, and Pine cover types. The  
82 Aspen type will decrease slightly as the Pine types increase.

83  
84 Aspen is the most abundant timber type on the Vilas County Forest, occupying 13,562 acres.  
85 The Aspen stands managed today are second-generation Aspen stands with first generation  
86 origins from logging and wildfires of the late 1800's through the early 1900's. Because Aspen  
87 provides habitat values to a wide variety of wildlife and is an important species for the wood  
88 products industry, the Vilas County Forest is committed to maintaining a large percentage of its  
89 Aspen acreage. However, there will be opportunities during harvest planning and natural events  
90 to convert a portion of the Aspen cover type to other forest cover types through natural or  
91 artificial regeneration techniques. These conversion opportunities will be considered on a case-  
92 by-case basis. Conversion activities could affect approximately 650 acres or 5 percent of the  
93 Aspen cover type over the next 10-15 years. The Oak, Jack Pine, Red Pine, and White Pine  
94 forest cover types will benefit the most from these conversion activities.

Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan identifies several broad conservation actions for forest communities located within the Northern Highland Ecological Landscape. One of the broad ecological opportunities identified within this Ecological Landscape includes increasing the representation of Red and White Pine forests. Most of the Vilas County Forest lies within this Ecological Landscape, as Vilas County was once part of the 'Great Pinery'. One of the goals of conversion is to look for opportunities to increase the forest cover type of pines. Conversion of Aspen to pine could increase the forest cover type of pines by as much as 350-acres over the next 10-15 years.

Vilas County intends to maintain or slightly increase the current acres of Oak type on the County Forest. Currently only 7% of the forest acreage is Oak type (2,689 acres). Conversion from Aspen to Oak could increase the Oak forest cover type on the County Forest by as much as 300 acres. The Oak Forest Cover type consists primarily of two different Oak types; Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) on higher quality sites and habitat types, and Northern Pin Oak (*Q. ellipsoidalis*) on sandy soils and poorer habitat types. The general management objective within the Oak types is to maintain Oak to produce the maximum quantity and quality of sawtimber and veneer within ecological and economic limitations, and maintain the wildlife and mast-producing benefits. The higher quality Oak sites may also be candidates for extended rotation, thereby contributing to age class diversification within the Oak type. Oak stands targeted for extended rotation will be identified when they are scheduled for treatment. On nutrient poor, droughty soils with Northern Pin Oak stands, clearcutting will be used to regenerate a component of Oak along with Aspen, White Birch, Jack Pine, and/or Red and White Pine.

The County Forest stands managed today originated after the logging and wildfires of the late 1800's through the early 1900's. They are for the most part even-aged. Forest cover types of species that are shade tolerant and longer-lived provide opportunities to move individual stands to an uneven age or an all-age condition. These opportunities occur primarily in the Northern Hardwood and White Pine cover types. The decision to diversify the age class within individual stands will be made on a case-by-case basis at the time of a scheduled harvest, considering the capabilities of the site and available economic resources.

#### TIMBER MANAGEMENT

- Conduct the 2019 scheduled timber harvest of approximately 1,044 acres. The acres to be treated by timber type are: Aspen 293 acres; White Pine 139 acres; Red Pine 249 acres; Jack Pine 119 acres; Oak 83 acres; Northern Hardwoods 122 acres; Black Spruce 39 acres. A detailed listing of the Forest Stands scheduled for treatment and the treatment types is attached.
- Continue the routine updating of the Forest Reconnaissance Information, approximately 2,000+ acres each year. A detailed listing of Compartment Stands is available at the Forestry Office.
- Prepare the Spring 2020 Timber Sale. There are 1,348 acres scheduled for treatment. The acres to be treated by timber type are: Aspen 333 acres; Cedar 12 acres; Hemlock 7 acres; Red Maple 1 acre; Northern Hardwoods 155 acres; Oak 168 acres; Jack Pine 68 acres; Red Pine 347 acres; White Pine 127 acres; Black Spruce 104 acres; Swamp Conifers 13 acres; Swamp Hardwoods 6 acres; White Spruce 7 acres. The acres not ready for harvest will be

deferred and rescheduled. See the attached 2020 Harvest Schedule.

- Coordinate with WDNR Liaison for assistance of 910 work-hours per year, which includes specialist assistance for disease and insect surveys, training, wildfire prevention & suppression, equipment operation for site preparation, and trail & road rehabilitation.
- Contract for and plant approximately 60 acres of Red Pine plantations.
- Contract for chemical and/or mechanical site preparation, approximately 160 acres.
- Contract for mechanical release, approximately 32 acres.
- Supervise site preparation for 2020 planting and natural regeneration, 160 acres.
- Oversee the administration of Timber Sale Contracts, (approximately 25) including the scaling and billing of wood products and documentation of contract activity.
- Supervise the survey of regeneration and plantations for survival, approximately 1,000 acres.
- Supervise the documentation, sales, and permitting for firewood gathering, camping, maps, air photos, and Christmas trees & boughs.
- Administer the documentation and issuance of logging access permits to protect the County Forest property when private landowners need access through the County Forest Land in the course of managing their private timber resources.
- Administer the documentation and issuance of disabled access permits on the County Forest for individuals with mobility disabilities.
- Investigate the possible conversion of Aspen stands growing on sandy, excessively drained soils or growing under a canopy of Red and White Pine
- Administer the Certification of the County Forest under the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Take corrective actions recommended by the Wisconsin DNR, WCFA legislative and Certification Committee, and approved by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and/or Forest Stewardship Council, to maintain compliance based on 2018 FSC and SFI audit results.
- Update the 15 Year Management Plan as changing conditions arise.
- Investigate and address forest health issues (including invasive species) as they arise and continue monitoring of Spruce Budworm and Oak Wilt.
- Develop an interactive mapping tool of trail assessments for the use of Power-Driven Mobility Devices (PDMDs) for disabled access on the County Forest. Continue trail assessments for appropriate use of PDMDs on County Forest trails based on environmental and safety criteria.

#### COUNTY FOREST ROADS

- Inspect and determine the needs for the maintenance and improvement of the 48.43-mile County Forest Road System.
- Coordinate with the Vilas County Highway Department and/or Parks and Recreation Administrator for the grading of the 48.43-mile County Forest Road system in spring and fall.
- Apply five inches of gravel to entire length of Snipe Lake Fire Lane west of Snipe Gravel Pit to Birchwood Drive approximately 1.65 miles.
- Schedule and/or contract with private business and/or Highway Dept. for patch gravel, side-brushing and other maintenance needs within the budget.
- Document work on County Forest Roads.

186  
187 LAND  
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- 189 • Contract for the certified survey of County Forest boundary lines, including the  
190 establishment of corners and witnesses, necessary to conduct the establishment of timber  
191 sales; approximately 2 miles.
- 192 • Continue the scheduled maintenance of the County Forest boundary lines and corners which  
193 have been established via certified survey or by agreement. Approximately 20-30 miles of  
194 boundary lines and associated corners are inspected and painted each year.
- 195 • Administer access requests, access permits (notice renewals; issue new), resolve boundary  
196 disputes, encroachments and mismeander of Scat Lake in Sec.9, T.40N.-R.9E.
- 197 • Complete acquisition of St Germain parcel from WI-DNR of forest land under, §28.10, Wis.  
198 Stats. to be held for replacement and entry into County Forest Law (§28.11, Wis. Stats.) due  
199 to expansion plans of the Landfill, as determined beneficial by the Forestry, Recreation, &  
200 Land Committee.
- 201 • Continue planning and collaboration with stakeholders, including the towns, to propose and  
202 develop recreational trails and policies to the Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee.  
203

204 Administer the disposition of lands acquired by Vilas County through tax delinquency.  
205

- 206 • Contract for environmental assessments of parcels prior to court action.
- 207 • Locate parcels and mark for public identification (erect “For Sale” signs).
- 208 • With the assistance of the Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee, determine any land  
209 management activities that will enhance the sale of tax deed parcels and increase County  
210 income.
- 211 • Contract for formal appraisals of parcels to be sold.
- 212 • Prepare a prospectus and resolution for disposition of tax deed parcels for review and  
213 approval by the County Board.
- 214 • Prepare approved parcels for public auction by sealed bid.
- 215 • Maintain real estate website.
- 216 • Conduct the transfer of ownership and maintain records.  
217

218 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
219

220 Supervise and plan for the improvement and maintenance of:

- 221 • 1/3 of the Habitat/Hiking Trail System, approximately 36 miles of mowing including the  
222 associated wildlife openings and parking areas. The specific units and maps are available  
223 in the Forestry Office.
- 224 • Maintain Habitat/Hiking Trail Unit signage.
- 225 • Determine and plan treatment of wildlife openings to control invasive plant species and  
226 planting to clover. The specific locations are yet to be determined.
- 227 • Coordinate with the Wisconsin – DNR, a Kirtland’s Warbler habitat restoration plan and  
228 treatment on Jack Pine regeneration.
- 229 • Determine the needs for berm/gate maintenance and gate installation.
- 230 • Maintain the deer enclosure fencing surrounding 4 sites planted to enhance wildlife food  
231 and cover under the electric transmission line.

232  
233 LEASES  
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- 235 • Renegotiate lease terms with FAA for Stormy Lake Radar Beacon.
- 236 • Oldenburg Sports Park: Administer the lease agreements. Act as Vilas County liaison
- 237 with the Headwaters Youth Soccer Association and the Softball Association.
- 238 • Fairgrounds: Oversee the lease agreements. Act as Vilas County liaison with the Fair Board
- 239 and Tennis Association.

240  
241 RECREATION  
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243 The Parks & Recreation Administrator is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of  
244 the County-owned recreation facilities.

- 245 • Sixteen (16) picnic areas with three (3) beaches.
- 246 • Ten (10) boat landings.
- 247 • Six (6) panfishing piers.
- 248 • One (1) shooting range.
- 249 • Thirty-eight (38) camping sites.
- 250 • Cranberry Island Recreation Site.
- 251 • Continue development of the River Road equestrian facilities and Torch Lake Park and
- 252 Campground and RV Park.

253  
254 TRAILS PROGRAM  
255

256 The Parks & Recreation Administrator is responsible for the administration, supervision and  
257 coordination of the Snowmobile Trails Program, ATV Trails Program, bicycle trail and  
258 equestrian trail development.

- 259 • Contracts for the maintenance of the Funded Snowmobile Trail System – 481.1 miles.
- 260 • Contract administration and trail inspections.
- 261 • Records and disbursements.
- 262 • Administration of trail development projects.
- 263 • Administration and contracting of the construction/rehabilitation of recreational bridges,
- 264 trail development projects and trail reroutes.
- 265 • Contract and administration of the maintenance of the Funded ATV Trail System- 40.6
- 266 miles.
- 267 • Oversee expansion and grooming of the X-C Ski Trail System, 8.6 miles. (Pioneer Creek
- 268 CC Ski Trail)
- 269 • Coordinate development of County recreational trails plan with assistance from North
- 270 Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.
- 271 • ATV trails Administration: Apply for funding and contract for maintenance and
- 272 development of ATV trails per Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee and County
- 273 Board approval. Administration of any development projects.
- 274 • Oversight and collaboration of maintenance of designated equestrian trails - 25 miles (Ski
- 275 Hill, Torch Lake and Pioneer Creek Loops).

277 RECORDS

- 278
- 279 • The Forest Administrator is responsible for the maintenance of the operations records for:
  - 280 Forest Management, Forest Certification, Logger Certification, County Lands (including
  - 281 lands obtained by tax deed and sold), Access Permits and Easements, Fish & Wildlife
  - 282 Conservation Projects, and the Buildings & Equipment of the Department.

283

284 FORESTRY, RECREATION, & LAND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 285
- 286 • Create the agendas for all Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee meetings.
  - 287 • Prepare and distribute information to the Committee regarding Department activities,
  - 288 resolutions to be brought before the County Board, correspondence and requests for action.
  - 289 • Record and maintain a copy of Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee meeting minutes.

290

291 ORGANIZATION INVOLVEMENT; TRAINING/CONTINUING EDUCATION

- 292
- 293 • Maintain involvement and support of Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA).
  - 294 • Continue participation on the WCFA Legislative and Certification Committee.
  - 295 • Continue involvement with Trees for Tomorrow.
  - 296 • Attend seminars on current knowledge and application of forest science through the
  - 297 Society of American Foresters, WDNR, University Extension, etc.
  - 298 • Attend safety and personnel workshops offered by Vilas County.
  - 299 • Coordinate services for and from other County departments.
  - 300 • Continue membership in the Society of American Foresters and maintain current status in
  - 301 the Certified Forester Program.

302

303 STAFF

- 304
- 305 • Supervise Department staff of Assistant Forest Administrator, Forestry Technician, and
  - 306 Administrative Assistant.
  - 307 • Maintain one (1) summer Forestry LTE position and oversight of that position.
  - 308 • Coordinate with Recreational Officer and Sheriff's Department for enforcement of
  - 309 County ordinances on the County Forest.

310

311 BUDGET

- 312
- 313 • Prepare the Department Monthly Budget Summary for review by staff and the Forestry,
  - 314 Recreation, & Land Committee.
  - 315 • Prepare the 2020 Forestry Department Budget.

316

317 PREPARE THE DEPARTMENT "ANNUAL REPORT OF OPERATIONS"

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319 HOST THE ANNUAL WORK PLANNING MEETING WITH WDNR FORESTRY AND

320 WILDLIFE PERSONNEL

322 MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT, & FACILITIES

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- Prepare an annual inventory of equipment.

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- Determine needs for maintenance and replacement of tools, equipment, etc.

326

- Contact Public Property Committee regarding infrastructure needs. Projects: repair water damage to the basement of the Forestry Office, construct seedling cooler in new storage building.

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330 Submitted and approved by Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee

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333 Steve Doyen, Chair

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Date